



Norton Fitzwarren Church of England Voluntary Controlled Community School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 123798
Local Authority Somerset
Inspection number 295725
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Wheeler HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blackdown View
School category	Voluntary controlled		Norton Fitzwarren
Age range of pupils	4–11		Taunton TA2 6TB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01823 276611
Number on roll (school)	94	Fax number	01823 324494
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jo Chester
		Headteacher	W Grace
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2004		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006	Inspection number 295725
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school and serves a mixed community including families from the local military base. The vast majority of children are from White British backgrounds and very few have English as an additional language. Only a few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has close ties with the local church. The headteacher is leaving at the end of term and will be replaced by an experienced local headteacher for the next two terms.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Its self-evaluation is accurate and close working with other schools has supported improvements. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Standards and achievement are now at satisfactory levels and last year's Year 6 results in English were the best yet. Reception children also make satisfactory progress towards the standards expected. Children enjoy learning and several commented that 'working hard' was the thing they liked best about school. Provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is very effective, but the more able children could do better if given greater challenges particularly in the infant classes. Almost half the 11 year olds in the 2006 tests reached the higher level in science, but this was not achieved in the other subjects.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Staff have good relationships with children, so they are keen to learn and behave very well. Good use is made of skilled learning support assistants, particularly in helping children with learning difficulties. Careful analysis of assessments is used appropriately to set class and group targets, but planning does not always use this information effectively. The learning objectives are often too general, resulting in missed opportunities for children to do better.

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Children want to be in school and are confident learners. They are proud of their achievements. The care, guidance and support provided are good. Children's progress is monitored effectively and extra help is given to those who need it. Children are encouraged to take care of themselves in the school's safe and secure environment.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The whole-school curriculum plan is being used well, but information and communication technology (ICT) is one of the areas still to be developed. Children have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills in the subject or to use them in other subjects.

The school knows what it needs to do to improve including making sure children's achievement and standards are the focus of all planning. Effective use of small group sessions for specific groups and accurate identification of the areas where standards needed to be raised have resulted in significant improvements. Careful monitoring of teaching and good use of subject focus weeks have meant the headteacher and subject leaders have been able to help colleagues improve. The strong vision of the headteacher has helped the school to make the most necessary improvements identified in the last inspection and the school is now well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all activities, including school improvement planning, have a sharper focus on exactly what children should be learning.
- Raise the achievement and standards of the higher attaining children, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Provide more consistent opportunities for children to use computers in a steady, structured way to support their learning in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Results at the end of Year 6 in 2006 show that pupils reached standards in English, mathematics and science in line with national figures. At the end of Year 2, results were broadly average although very few children attained the higher levels in reading, writing or mathematics. Records show that most children make steady progress based on regular assessments and monitoring of children's work. Standards and achievement are also improving because most children are beginning to understand what they are aiming for and how to reach their challenging targets. This helps them to enjoy trying to do their best.

When children start school, assessments show them to be at average levels. Most make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected nationally by the time they start Year 1. Insufficient use is made of the thorough end of year assessments of Reception children to set individual targets for them in Year 1, which sometimes results in insufficient challenge.

The needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities are met effectively and children make satisfactory progress, with good use made of well targeted support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Reception children settle quickly into school life and form good relationships. Children like school and enjoy lessons, clubs and other activities. This is reflected in their good attendance and behaviour.

Children have fond memories of special trips, such as a visit to Bristol Zoo. They loved a special drumming workshop when they played authentic African instruments. This session produced many smiling faces. Children's spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Social and moral development is good. Children respect one another and develop a satisfactory understanding of individual differences. They get on well together and Year 6 children act as playground leaders organising lunchtime games for the younger ones.

Children know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school and they know where to go for help should they need it. Several said how they value the regular class massage

sessions, which make them feel calm, and the extra things the school does to recognise what they do well. Many bring fruit and healthy snacks at break times. After-school sports clubs are popular and well attended which help the children to develop healthy lifestyles.

The school council enables children to have a say in the life of the school. They also make a contribution beyond school, particularly through activities linked to the church. The satisfactory standards reached in basic skills and experience of working in groups and teams will help fit children for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Planning clearly shows what activities are to be provided and, in the better lessons, includes detailed objectives for children's learning across the age and ability range within the class. Teachers use questioning very effectively to assess children's understanding before they move on to the next part of the lesson. Children benefit greatly from the careful deployment of skilled learning support assistants who work particularly well with those with learning difficulties.

In some classes, there is a developing focus on involving children in assessing their own learning needs. For example, older children use 'mind maps' to plot what they know about a subject and what they need to find out. This helps them to be more actively involved in their learning by understanding how to organise their work and to measure their success. Children trust the staff and know that they will support them if they get stuck. As a consequence, children feel secure in lessons and know that their progress is recognised and celebrated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory throughout the school. The new curriculum plan is being used well to make sure children cover a breadth of subjects and do not repeat activities unnecessarily in their mixed age classes.

Detailed planning for English, mathematics and science has helped to raise standards. In some cases, the short, focused programmes for children with learning difficulties are particularly successful in improving achievement. Several children in Year 6 said how beneficial they found these extra sessions, particularly in mathematics. The school is aware that further work is necessary to develop planning in some subjects, such as physical education and ICT.

The curriculum is broadened in several ways to boost children's enjoyment of school, including residential visits, specialist music teaching, and regular sessions from sports coaches. These, together with the good range of after school sports clubs and Team

Theme sessions, make learning enjoyable and help to promote children's social skills and general well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care, guidance and support makes a positive contribution to children's enjoyment of school and to their improving achievement. The school provides special support for any who need extra nurturing or a quiet one to one session to help them feel happier and succeed. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good attention and sensitive support. Staff go out of their way to ensure children feel included and provide good feedback so children know how to improve. The school uses assessments very effectively to identify which children have a learning difficulty and need additional support. The more able children are not always given the guidance necessary for them to reach higher standards. Procedures for safeguarding children and ensuring their health and safety comply with requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some strong features. The clear vision, skills and commitment of the headteacher and of the governors, subject leaders and local authority officers have resulted in considerable improvements in what children are taught, the progress made, and the standards reached. Governors are well led and are developing the skills they need to take the school forward. The new headteacher demonstrates the commitment to build effectively on these hard won gains to work with staff in making further improvements.

The monitoring of teaching and learning is effective. Feedback from observations has enabled teachers to improve their practice and help children to do better. The special educational needs coordinator makes a strong contribution to helping children with learning difficulties to do their best.

The leadership team has quite rightly focused on the subjects identified for improvement at the last inspection. Through rigorous self-evaluation and careful targeting of areas of weakness, the school has managed to raise standards to satisfactory levels in English, mathematics and science over the past two years from a low starting point. This is due in part to the use of clear learning targets which most children know and understand. Weaknesses in other subjects have been clearly identified as priorities in the school's improvement plan.

The leadership and management are rightly proud of the improvements made since going into special measures and are in a good position to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for helping us to feel so welcome in your school, for answering our questions, and sharing your work with us. As you know, I have visited your school lots of times over the past 18 months to see how well it is improving and many of you know me quite well. I am delighted to tell you that you will no longer need me to visit as everyone at your school, including you, has worked hard to make your school better.

- Here are some of the good things we found.
- You are learning more and more and this is helping you to reach satisfactory standards.
- You know about healthy eating and enjoy playing outside and getting lots of exercise. Sports activities are a real favourite.
- Your teachers and other staff look after you very well and help you if you have a problem.
- You behave very well and enjoy coming to school. We know you like working hard and trying to do your best.
- You work well in groups and with partners and are keen to answer your teachers' questions.
- The things you are learning about will help you when you get older.

- This is what could be done to help your school improve.
- We want your teachers to make sure that each lesson is focused on exactly what you should be learning.
- Some of you need to have harder work to help you do even better.
- You know quite a lot about working on computers, but we think you should have more chances to use them in other subjects.

We hope you continue to help Norton Fitzwarren to be a good school.